

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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R 281943Z JAN 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USMISSION JEC PARIS

USSAGE NAKHON PHANOM

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COGARD WASHDC

XMT AMEMBASSY SUVA

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COGARD FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XC, US

SUBJECT: JANUARY 28 EA PRESS SUMMARY

INDOCHINA

1. THOUSANDS FLEE HOMES IN SOUTH AND SE PP TO ESCAPE
ARTILLERY FIRE, STREAMING TO CENTRAL AND NORTHERN
SECTIONS, MOVE INTO PAGODAS, MAKESHIFT CAMPS OR WITH
RELATIVES. IN BIGGEST BOMBARDMENT OF CURRENT CAMPAIGN,
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MORE THAN 100 SHELLS HIT PP AND POCHENTONG LAST NIGHT;

35 DEAD, 75 WOUNDED. FANK COUNTEROFFENSIVE AGAINST PRESUMED ARTILLERY POSITIONS BOGS DOWN. KAF FLIES SCORES OF SORTIES AGAINST SUSPECTED POSITIONS WITHOUT SUCCESS (UPI NYT, NYDN). FIELD REPORTS SAY FANK STRIKES AT CENTER OF REBEL DRIVE AGAINST INTENSE FIRE, RETAKES TWO-MILE STRETCH ALONG PP'S SOUTHERN FRONT IN INITIAL STEP TO ELIMINATE ARTILLERY BARRAGES THAT HAVE KILLED 145 AND WOUNDED 354 SINCE DEC. 23. SOME REBELS PULLING BACK TO SOUTH, LEAVING SMALL ELEMENTS BEHIND TO HINDER ANTICIPATED FANK DRIVE. FIGHTING STILL HEAVY 8 MILES SW OF PP (AP SUN, PHINQ).

2. BECKER (WP) FROM PP DESCRIBES CITY'S AGONY AS REBELS ESCALATE ARTILLERY FIRE. PAST ROCKET ATTACKS HIT NORTH AND EAST SECTIONS SO MANY RELOCATED TO SOUTH AND

WEST. NOW PEOPLE FLEE NORTH. AFP REPORTS OVER 300 SHELLS HIT CITY IN PAST 4 DAYS. BECKER TELLS OF BARRAGE SATURDAY THAT CAUSED PANIC: RELIEF WORKERS REFUSED TO ENTER SW PART OF CITY TO SEARCH FOR VICTIMS, SOLDIERS DESERTED POSTS AROUND LON NOL'S HOME, KAF "WAS NOT TO BE SEEN" AND ONLY HAD A FEW GUNSHIPS UP; AND US DIPLOMAT OFFERED HOME TO JOURNALISTS WHO MIGHT FEAR FOR THEIR LIVES. FOREIGN MILITARY SPECIALIST DRAWS ANALOGY TO CRITICAL MASS IN PHYSICS, WITH FANK AT STATIC CONCENTRATION LEVEL AND UNABLE TO EXPAND BUT WILL NOT LOSE WHAT THEY CONTROL. BECKER SAYS REBEL ARTILLERY INCLUDES 30 US 105-MM GUNS CAPTURED DURING PAST FIVE MONTHS. FANK PUSHES SOUTH WITH AIR AND ARMOR SUPPORT BUT SO FAR UNSUCCESSFUL IN DISLODGING REBELS FROM BASES THREE MILES SOUTH OF CITY. REBEL RADIO ANNOUNCES VICTORIES, CLAIMS HAS 14,000 SRSR TROOPS, LED BY MEMBER OF FORMER ROYAL FAMILY, WILL CONTINUE BOMBARDMENT, ATTACK RIVER CONVOYS AND THEN ENTER CAPITAL. HIGH-RANKING KHMER OFFICER SEES PROPAGANDA AS "QUITE EFFECTIVE" IN SOWING CONFUSION. FOREIGNERS AND WEALTHY RESIDENTS LIVE IN STRONG HOUSES, BUT MANY FOREIGNERS LEFT, WITH MORE GOING THIS WEEK. REBELS ASKED FOREIGNERS AND KHMER TO LEAVE, INVITING LATTER TO JOIN THEIR FORCES. BUT ROADS ARE CUT AND UNCLASSIFIED

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AIR TICKET TO SAFER PLACE OUT OF REACH OF MOST. MANY UPPER CLASS KHMER BELIEVE CRISIS WILL BE OVER SOON SINCE "THIS IS THE PATTERN OF THIS WAR", BUT OTHERS WORRY THAT IT WON'T BE. SOME STUDENTS JOINING KHMER INTELLECTUALS IN PARIS SUPPORTING SON SANN CALL FOR IMMEDIATE NEGOTS ALONG LAOS LINES, BUT FOREIGNERS SEE LITTLE HOPE FOR NEGOTS AND FEAR SITUATION WILL CONTINUE WITH MINOR REBEL VICTORIES AND GKR HOLDING

CITIES. HIGHLY PLACED DIPLOMAT SEES BOTH SIDES AS
"DETERMINED TO WIN A MILITARY VICTORY".

3. FOUR-MAN ABC TEAM HELD 24 HOURS BY GVN, RELEASED
SUNDAY, AFTER FILMING VC VILLAGE 65 MILES NW OF
SAIGON. ABC SAIGON SAYS CAMERAS AND FILM CONFISCATED.
GVN SPOKESMAN SAYS VISITS TO VC ZONE ALLOWED ONLY
WITH CLEARANCE; ABC CREW DID NOT INFORM GVN OF TRIP.
ABC SAIGON SAYS THEY DID HAVE GVN "BLESSING" BUT SOME
SLIP-UP IN ARRANGEMENTS OCCURRED (NYT; AP WP, PHINQ).
4. PRAVDA CONTRADICTS SOVIET GEOGRAPHERS (WHOSE
ATLASES LABEL PARACELS AS CHINESE), IMPLICITLY TAKES
GVN'S SIDE IN DISPUTE BY QUOTING FROM ASIAN NEWSPAPERS
THAT DESCRIBE PRC MILITARY ACTION IN ISLANDS AS
"EXPANSIONIST AND A THREAT TO OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES"
(WP, MOSCOW).

5. SON OF PROMINENT ANTI-GVN FIGURE, MRS. NGO BA THANH,
RELEASED FROM OVERNIGHT DETENTION FOR SPEAKING WITH
FOREIGN NEWSMEN WHO WERE BLOCKED BY POLICE FROM ENTERING
FAMILY'S HOME FOR CONFERENCE (NYT). AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
IN LONDON CALLS ON GVN AND VC TO RELEASE CIVILIAN
PRISONERS, SENDSS HAK AND LE DUC THO LETTERS ASKING
THEY USE INFLUENCE TO SPEED EXCHANGE. SAYS BOTH SIDES
UNDERESTIMATE NUMBERS, HOLD TENS OF THOUSANDS FOR
POLITICAL REASONS UNDER "INADEQUATE AND INHUMANE"
CONDITIONS (AP, SUN).

6. SHIPLER (NYT) FROM SAIGON REPORTS OFFICIAL US
FIGURES SHOW THAT SINCE C-F US HAS PROVIDED SVN WITH
ABOUT 284.7 MILLION DOLS WORTH OF WEAPONS AND AMMO.
FIGURE ROUGHLY 75 PERCENT OF 1972 LEVEL, WHEN FIGHTING
WAS "EXTREMELY HEAVY." US EMBASSY SPOKESMAN SAYS
GREATEST PART OF POST C-F TOTAL -- 276 MILLION -- WENT
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FOR AMMO AND BOMBS, WITH REMAINDER FOR WEAPONS AND
EQUIPMENT. US OFFICIALS INSIST C-F RESTRICTIONS BEING
FAITHFULLY OBSERVED, BUT NO INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION
POSSIBLE SINCE JMC AND ICCS UNABLE AGREE ON INSPECTION
METHOD. SHIPLER SAYS WASHINGTON REPORTS INDICATE
AMB. MARTIN HAS ASKED ADDITIONAL NEW EQUIPMENT FOR
SVN. US OFFICIALS CONTEND F-5ES THAT WILL SOON REPLACE
GVN'S F-5S DO NOT VIOLATE C-F AGREEMENT ON REPLACEMENT,
BUT SHIPLER SAYS F-5E FASTER, MORE MANEUVERABLE AND
CARRIES BIGGER BOMB LOAD. US OFFICIALS SAY THEY MAKE
NO EFFORT TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN WEAPONS LOST AND
AMMO USED IN OFFENSIVE AS COMPARED TO DEFENSIVE
ACTIONS SINCE CANNOT DETERMINE WITHOUT BEING \$N SCENE;
SO GVN GENERALLY GETS WHAT IT ASKS FOR, WITH ONLY
FEW EXCEPTIONS. TOTAL ARMAMENT RESUPPLY FIGURES NOT

MADE PUBLIC BEFORE AND PROVIDED NOW ONLY AFTER US
OFFICIALS REPEATEDLY QUESTIONED BY NYT. PRIOR FIGURES
RELEASED DID NOT INCLUDE ALL BRANCHES OF SVN FORCES.
PRESENT FIGURES DO NOT BREAK AMMO DOWN BY QUANTITY
AND KIND. AMMO AND WEAPONS ONLY PART OF TOTAL MILITARY
AID (BUDGETED AT 813 MILLION DOLS THIS FY) THAT ALSO
INCLUDES FUEL, RATIONS, UNIFORMS, SPARE PARTS AND
SALARIES OF US CIVILIANS DOING MAINTENANCE WORK. SVN
MILITARY COMMAND ALSO ISSUED STATISTIC INDICATING
60,984 VIETS DIED IN COMBAT SINCE C-F, INCLUDING 2159
CIVILIANS, 45,057 COMMUNIST TROOPS AND 13,778 ARVN.

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7. IN BEIRUT, NYT'S HIJAZI REPORTS THAT GOJ AND OTHER
OIL-HUNGRY NATIONS HAVE CONCLUDED 6 BILLION DOLS
IN DEALS, INCLUDING LOANS, SERVICES AND INVESTMENT,
FOR LONG-TERM OIL CONTRACTS WITH ME OIL COUNTRIES IN
LAST FEW MONTHS. NOTES THAT JAPANESE GOVT. AND PRIVATE
BUSINESS WORKING HAND-IN-HAND IN OFFERING INVESTMENT
ABROAD AND SEEKING NEW OIL CONTRACTS.

8. WSJ'S HARTLEY OBSERVES THAT WITH JAPAN FORCED INTO
PRODUCTION CUTBACKS, GOVTS. FROM SEOUL TO SINGAPORE
THAT HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN PURCHASING SCARCE ITEMS
FROM JAPAN ARE COMPLAINING ABOUT INABILITY TO GET
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BADLY NEEDED STEEL, FERTILIZER, PLASTICS AND SYNTHETIC
FIBER MATERIALS. SAYS SOME OF THOSE DEPENDENT ON
JAPAN COMPLAIN THAT TOKYO GIVES PREFERENCE TO BIG
COUNTRIES LIKE PRC FOR POLITICAL REAS
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